

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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R 261735Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3107
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
USMISSION USNATO
AMEMBASSY VALLETTA
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT
USNMR SHAPE BE

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 9839

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, MT, IT, FR
SUBJECT: JOINT TALKS ON MALTA NEUTRALITY GUARANTEE

1. MFA GAVE US READOUT MAY 26 ON LATEST ROUND OF MALTESE-FRENCH-ITALIAN TALKS ON NEUTRALITY GUARANTEE, WHICH WAS HELD MAY 18-19. ITALIANS CONSIDER MEETING SUCCESSFUL BECAUSE IT CLARIFIED THE THREE MAJOR UNRESOLVED POINTS OF THE TEXT OF THE GUARANTEE: (1) ITS JURIDICAL NATURE; (2) THE QUESTION OF ACCESS TO MALTESE SHIPYARDS; AND (3) THE QUESTION OF WHETHER THE DECLARATIONS OF THE GUARANTORS HAD TO BE IDENTICAL.

2. NATURE OF GUARANTEE: AT MEETING IT WAS AGREED THAT NEUTRALITY HAD TO BE CONSIDERED AS JURIDICAL, NOT POLITICAL, CONCEPT. THUS MINTOFF'S IDEA THAT MALTESE NEUTRALITY
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COULD BE DEFINED ON BASIS ON NON-ALIGNMENT, A POLITICAL CONCEPT, WAS NOT ACCEPTABLE. MALTESE HAVE NOW AGREED TO JURIDICAL DEFINITION.

3. ACCESS TO MALTESE SHIPYARDS: UNDER TERMS OF GUARANTEE, MILITARY SHIPS OF COUNTRIES THAT BELONG TO MAJOR ALLIANCES WOULD BE FORBIDDEN ACCESS TO MALTESE SHIPYARDS. WE WERE

TOLD THAT FRENCH IN PARTICULAR WERE RELUCTANT TO HAVE NAME OF ALLIANCES--NATO AND WARSAW PACT--SPECIFIED, AND ALL AGREED THAT THE TERM MAJOR ALLIANCES--(GRANDI ALLEANZE)--WOULD COVER PROBLEM. IN THIS CONTEXT, MFA SAID THAT DA RIN'S TELEGRAM REPORTING HIS CONVERSATION WITH AMBASSADOR LAINGEN ABOUT ACCESS HAD ARRIVED AFTER CONCLUSION OF MEETING WITH MALTESE AND FRENCH BUT THAT ITALIANS HAD IN ANY CASE PROTECTED US INTEREST BY LANGUAGE ABOUT ALLIANCES. MFA OFFICIAL ADDED THAT US SHOULD HAVE MORE CONFIDENCE ABOUT ITALIAN ABILITY TO PROTECT WESTERN INTERESTS.

4. WORDING OF DECLARATION: ITALIANS FORESEE THAT ON APRIL 1, 1979, FOLLOWING MALTESE DECLARATION OF NEUTRALITY, FOUR OTHER NATIONS INVOLVED--ITALY, FRANCE, ALGERIA, AND LIBYA--WILL MAKE STATEMENTS GUARANTEEING NEUTRALITY. ITALIANS INSISTED THAT WORDING OF ALL FOUR DECLARATIONS HAS TO BE IDENTICAL, NOT JUST SIMILAR. MALTESE RESISTED THIS, SAYING THAT LIBYANS ARE WILLING TO GO FARTHER THAN ITALIANS IN TERMS OF THEIR GUARANTEE. ITALIANS, HOWEVER, HELD OUT, AND MEETING AGREED THAT WORDING WOULD BE IDENTICAL. PROBLEM OF NEGOTIATING TEXT WITH LIBYANS AND ALGERIANS RESTS WITH MALTA.

5. MFA SAID THAT CONTRARY TO PREVIOUS UNDERSTANDINGS, MALTESE ATTORNEY GENERAL MIZZI SAID THAT HE WAS NOT AUTHORIZED TO INITIAL THE AGREEMENT BUT HAD TO REFER IT BACK TO
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VALLETTA. EVEN SO, HE ASSURED ITALIANS AND FRENCH THAT TEXT WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE. ITALIANS ARE NOW AWAITING NOTE VERBALE FROM MALTESE CONFIRMING THEIR ACCEPTANCE. MFA THINKS IT UNLIKELY THAT NOTE WILL APPEAR BEFORE SOME MOVEMENT HAS BEEN MADE ON FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS. FOR THIS REASON, ITALIANS HOPE THAT EC CAN MOVE AHEAD TO WORK OUT PROGRAM. AS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED, ITALIANS INTEND TO CONTINUE THEIR ANNUAL CONTRIBUTION OF \$4 MILLION BUT ONLY IN FORM OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE. THEY HOPE THAT ALL MEMBERS OF EC WILL MAKE SOME CONTRIBUTION, EVEN IF ONLY SYMBOLIC.

6. COMMENT: WE NOTE THAT VALLETTA 1475 (JUST RECEIVED) REPORTS THAT DA RIN SAID THAT EXPLICIT SUPER-POWER EXCLUSION APPEARS IN TEXT. WE WERE SHOWN ONLY THAT PARAGRAPH OF TEXT WHICH STATES THAT ALL MEMBERS OF MAJOR ALLIANCES, NOT JUST US AND USSR, ARE PROHIBITED FROM USE OF SHIPYARD FOR MILITARY SHIPS. GARDNER

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